

**Bob Hardin Testimony
Amendment to HB343
March 17, 2009 Room 317**

**Mr. Chairman, members of the committee,
My Name is Bob Hardin and I am the manager of Greenfields
Irrigation District, which is located in Fairfield and consists of upwards
of 700 waterusers on 83,000 irrigated acres being one of the largest
irrigation districts in the state.**

**In 2004, Greenfields, in conjunction with Tollhouse Energy of
Bellingham, WA. conducted a feasibility study directed at the possibility
of constructing a hydroelectric facility at the base of Gibson Dam, which
is our primary storage reservoir. We are currently in the final stages of
the permitting process and will submit our final license application to
FERC within the next month or so.**

**Originally this was to be a 10MW project, but after recalculating the
water release numbers we felt comfortable with increasing this to
15MW. Current law states on page 2, lines 13 through 22 "to be an
eligible renewable resource, hydroelectric projects must have a
nameplate capacity of 10MW or less". We are very interested in selling
the electricity from this project in the State of Montana but the MW
restriction will not allow us to sell green tags within the state and would
force us to look elsewhere for a power sales agreement, such as
California. In essence, what we are seeking is an amendment to raise
this restriction to 25 MW.**

**Recently, I was listening to testimony on HB 207 that would raise the
Community renewable energy projects from 5MW to 25MW. I
understand that has passed and amending this section would clean up
the law having a consistent 25MW rating throughout. I have also
noticed that there is no restriction for the other renewables listed in the
current law and the reason for any MW restriction regarding
hydropower is unknown to me.**

**On behalf of the Board of Commissioners, Greenfields Irrigation
District offers this amendment.**